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*Rowland Evans and Robert Novak*Colby's Censored  
SALT Testimony

A tentative decision of the Ford administration security censors, refusing to make public highly damaging criticism by Central Intelligence Director William Colby of Moscow's conduct under the 1972 strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT I), has flabbergasted Pentagon arms experts.

Colby's testimony, given to Sen. Henry M. Jackson's Senate Arms Control Subcommittee Feb. 11, raised grave questions about the "good faith" of the Soviet Union in following the spirit and the letter of the 1972 agreement. Thus it came close to the heart of the dispute raging here over whether Moscow cheated on SALT I. What's more, it provided ammunition for Jackson, who has come close to charging Moscow with outright violation of the 1972 agreement.

Testifying in secret session, Colby declared: "I do not think you could convict them of a violation as of this moment (last February), although what they are doing casts in doubt their good faith and their attempt to reassure us as to their compliance, certainly."

Colby's testimony is now being pruned by administration censors for security deletions, following which it will be made public (as former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's testimony on the same subject has just been made public). The tentative deletion of Colby's aspersion on Moscow's "good faith" could only be based on a policy consideration, since it contains nothing remotely touching the military or intelligence security of the U.S. That consideration, often enunciated by administration arms control officials, is that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have agreed to avoid public discussion of all questions of compliance under terms of SALT I.

What has puzzled Pentagon experts is that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger himself voluntarily raised the whole compliance question for the first time in his long press conference at the State Department last week.

If Kissinger can talk publicly to the press about Soviet compliance with SALT I, Colby should have at least the same right, Defense officials feel. By virtue of his role as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Colby might have more right.

The charges of Soviet cheating, made publicly by former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird and other anti-Soviet hardliners, involve two basic allegations: That Moscow has tested sophisticated radar in a "mode" specifically barred by the treaty; and that the Soviet Union has substituted large intercontinental missiles (ICBMs) for "light" ICBMs—not in violation of the treaty but in direct contravention of a unilateral American understanding.

Since Kissinger discussed the compliance question himself last week, the only logical explanation for deleting Colby's warning is administration fear of building an anti-Soviet backlash in this country at just the time President Ford and Kissinger seek SALT II agreement, possibly at the cost of new concessions to Moscow.

A secret poll of Illinois Republicans shows President Ford rapidly losing ground to Ronald Reagan in a state indispensable to his nomination.

A statewide survey of 606 registered Republicans taken the weekend after Thanksgiving for Reagan by the DMI polling firm shows Ford 43 per cent, Reagan 33 per cent, undecided 13 per cent—a result in some ways more staggering for Mr. Ford than last week's Gallup poll showing Reagan ahead nationally among Republicans.

The reason: Ford operatives regard Illinois as by far their strongest state among the early primaries. Former Gov. Richard Ogilvie, the Ford state chairman, has rounded up every prestigious Illinois Republican (with the exception of Rep. Philip Crane, the Reagan state chairman). So, Howard H. (Bo) Callaway, the President's campaign manager, has been privately putting out word that even if Mr. Ford loses in New Hampshire Feb. 24 and Florida March 9, he will recoup with a vengeance in Illinois March 16.

Actually, it is unlikely that native Illinoisan Reagan ever trailed Mr. Ford there by the 25 to 15 margin once predicted by Callaway. But early polls showed a 2-to-1 Ford edge. The 12-percentage-point lead in DMI's new poll, reflecting Ford voters going over to undecided more than to Reagan, might not be able to stand up under Ford defeats in earlier primaries.

Moreover, the entire presidential lead in Illinois stems from substantial leads among young (18 to 25 years old) and old (over 55) voters. DMI shows the candidate about even among the great mass of voters between 25 and 55. National Reagan headquarters here has refused comment on the poll, which leaked via Illinois politicians.

A footnote: Ogilvie last Wednesday rejected a telephoned offer from state Rep. Don Totten, Reagan's Illinois campaign director, to divide up the state's 99 delegates elected by district. That assures head-on delegate fights in many districts besides the Ford-vs.-Reagan preferential "beauty contest" on top of the ballot.

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